



Centre for
Pastoral
Development

ARCHDIOCESE OF CAPE TOWN

A SERIES OF FOUR PRAYER SERVICES
FOR PARISH SMALL FAITH-SHARING COMMUNITIES

The Eucharist

SOURCE AND SUMMIT
OF THE CHURCH'S LIFE

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| Session 1: | Our Life... Our Identity |
| Session 2: | Word... Eucharist... Life |
| Session 3: | One Bread... One Body |
| Session 4: | Our Hope... Our Joy |



Much of the input in this series is taken from the original Ecclesia series drawn up by the Centre for Pastoral Development in the Archdiocese of Cape Town.

FORMAT OF EACH SESSION

- ✦ Welcome, meet and greet
- ✦ Opening Prayer and hymn
- ✦ Introduce the session by reading the input passage
- ✦ Scripture Reading and Reflection Quotes
- ✦ Reflection (personal – questions given to guide the personal reflection)
- ✦ Sharing and Discussion (within the group)
- ✦ Action (for the week ahead)
- ✦ Closing Prayer and hymn



WHAT IS A PARISH SMALL FAITH-SHARING COMMUNITY?

It is a gathering of 6-12 people who meet to read and reflect on the materials provided. Each small group is made up of a variety of people, they may be people of different ages, diverse backgrounds and a variety of interests or they may be a group of people like the Parish catechists, or the stay-at-home moms, or the recently widowed - who do have similar interests. A faith-sharing group provides a place where we can simply

be ourselves in a comfortable, friendly atmosphere - a place where we can renew ourselves spiritually. Faith-sharing is a prayerful experience of listening to God's word as well as other writings from Vatican II and the Catechism of the Catholic Church and then sharing how this is lived in our own lives and the lives of others. It is also a great way to meet and get to know others in your parish community.

GUIDELINES FOR SMALL FAITH-SHARING GROUP FACILITATORS

GROUP FACILITATORS ARE EXPECTED TO:

- ✦ Contact all group members before the Season begins to make sure each member knows the details of where and when the meetings will be.
- ✦ Prepare thoroughly for each meeting by reviewing the material and making sure he/she is familiar with all the texts quoted before the meeting.
- ✦ Make sure every participant has a full copy of the material for the session.
- ✦ Facilitate the small group discussion, keeping group members focused on the topic in a lively and interesting way. Encourage the group members to seek for new ways to explore and develop the material that is presented in their own lives and situations.
- ✦ Practise the reading of the input (*from Ecclesia*). This is a “mini-sermon” you are giving and it must be recited very well.
- ✦ The Action points given here are just examples; your group might come up with others.
- ✦ Pray consistently for the people in the group and the Parish leadership.
- ✦ Encourage the group to love one another in specific and tangible ways, seeing the small group as a supportive community for its members, and an integral part of the larger Parish Community.
- ✦ Call or follow up with group members who are absent - they appreciate such care when they are unable to attend a meeting.

SOME POINTS TO NOTE FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING AND DISCUSSION

Reflection is personal and private, a time to be with God and one’s innermost self.

Sharing is voicing personal thoughts and feelings. Listeners should not comment, agree or disagree, just accept what has been shared as a gift.

Discussion is respectfully debating and deliberating issues related to the topic of the meeting.

SESSION 1

OUR LIFE... OUR IDENTITY

1. WELCOME, MEET AND GREET

2. OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Let us come before the Lord in prayer as we begin our season of prayer services during this Jubilee Year:

All: Lord Jesus Christ, our desire is to seek you and to love you with all our hearts. We have committed ourselves to following you who are the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Teach us to love as you did, even to laying down our lives for our family and our friends. Be with us as we travel the pilgrim road of hope this year, so that our hearts may burn with love and joy. Glory be to the Father...

We sing together: (an alternate piece of music can be used)

*Here in this place, new light is streaming,
Now is the darkness vanished away.
See, in this space, our fears and our dreamings,
Brought here to you in the light of this day.
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken,
Gather us in, the blind and the lame;
Call to us now and we shall awaken,
We shall arise at the sound of our name.*

*We are the young – our lives are a mystery,
We are the old – who yearn for your face.
We have been sung throughout all of history,
Called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty,
Gather us in, the proud and the strong;
Give us a heart, so meek and so lowly,
Give us the courage to enter the song.*

YouTube link for this hymn:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGxrL83mocQ>

3. INPUT (*from Ecclesia series*)

The Eucharist is at the very heart of our Catholic Faith and identity. As Church, we are a Eucharistic People and we should always consider ourselves as such. Unfortunately, this is not always how we actually see ourselves or understand ourselves to be. By her very nature, the Church is sacramental, revealing Jesus and making him present and nowhere is this clearer than in Eucharist.

It is in Eucharist that we celebrate who we are in Jesus and, at the same time, grow into him and his way of life. Put into other words, the Eucharist is the high point to which all the activity of the Church is directed and the point from which all her power flows as from a great fountain – the summit and source of our life in Christ. That life is always for the Father and for others.

Of necessity, the Eucharist is all about sacrifice – the perfect sacrifice of Jesus that is made present and our own sacrifices that are joined into his. So what are our sacrifices? They all that we do in love, that Jesus asks us to do – to love one another, to forgive our enemies and those who give us a hard time, to bring healing and reconciliation into our relationships and our society, to care for the poor and needy, to transform the world around us.

At the same time our sacrifices are our striving to love, worship, honour God, our submitting our lives and our wills to his, our growing in holiness in him. In turn that takes us back to who we are for others. To truly celebrate Eucharist is for us to submit and sacrifice all to God.

So often the complaint is made that people get nothing out of the Mass – well the truth is that we are never going to get anything out until we put something in, since this is what it is all about. When we do grasp this, then we celebrate Eucharist as worship of God (our sacrifices in the sacrifice of Jesus that gives glory to God) and at the same time we are made holy – so what comes back to us is completely dependent on what we put of ourselves into Eucharist.

In everything, our lives should give glory to God (worship and praise) since everything that we have and are comes from God. It is the Eucharist that brings together all the moments and actions of our lives into one great act of worship that transcends what we might consider insignificant and unimportant. How wonderful that our lives, often small and limited, should become part of something so much greater than ourselves. It is for us to realize that in Eucharist we come into the very

presence of God and minister to him by the very lives we place into the sacrifice of Jesus.

4. SCRIPTURE READING AND REFLECTION QUOTES

ROMANS 8:28 – 36

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but

gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

Quote on which to reflect:

ST JOHN VIANNY (1786 – 1859)

“Not to go to Communion is like someone dying of thirst beside a spring”

5. REFLECTION

Individual Reflection on the following:

- ✦ If the celebration of the Eucharist is an expression of our gratitude to God, for what am I grateful today?
- ✦ What do I need to put into the celebration of the Eucharist to make it more meaningful to me?

6. GROUP SHARING AND DISCUSSION

7. ACTION FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

Ways in which to live out our response to the sharing, e.g. Before going to Mass this Sunday, take time to consciously

make a sacrifice in your life and then place that sacrifice on the altar when you celebrate Mass next time.

8. CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: At the Last Supper, our Saviour entrusted to his Church the memorial of his death and resurrection, to be celebrated forever. Let us adore him and say ...

All: Sanctify your people redeemed by your blood

Leader: In their trials enable your faithful people to share in your passion and so reveal in their lives your saving power ...

All: Sanctify your people redeemed by your blood.

Leader: You humbled yourself by being obedient even to accepting death on a

cross, give all who serve you the gifts of obedience and patient endurance ...

All: Sanctify your people redeemed by your blood.

Leader: Grant O Lord that, just as we are renewed by the supper of your Son in this present age, so may we enjoy his banquet for all eternity...

All: Sanctify your people redeemed by your blood.

Our Father who art in heaven ...

Leader: (While making the sign of the cross)

May the Lord bless us, keep us from harm and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

We sing together: (see link above)

*Here we will take the wine and the water,
Here we will take the bread of new birth.
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters,
Call us anew to be salt for the earth.
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,
Give us to eat the bread that is you;
Nourish us well and teach us to fashion
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true.*

*Not in the dark of buildings confining,
Not in some heaven, light years away,
but
Here in this place, the new light is shining,
Now is the Kingdom, now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us for ever,
Gather us in and make us your own;
Gather us in all peoples together,
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.*

SOCIAL TIME

SESSION 2

WORD... EUCHARIST... LIFE

1. WELCOME, MEET AND GREET

2. OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Lord Jesus Christ, you gave us the Eucharist as the memorial of your suffering and death. May our worship of this sacrament of your body and blood help us to experience the salvation

you won for us and the peace of the kingdom where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Glory be to the Father and to the Son ...

We sing together: (an alternate piece of music can be used)

*This is My body, broken for you,
bringing you wholeness, making you
free.*

*Take it and eat it, and when you do,
do it in love for Me.*

*This is My blood poured out for you,
bringing forgiveness, making you free.*

*Take it and drink it, and when you do,
do it in love for Me.*

Back to My father soon I shall go.

Do not forget Me; then you will see

*I am still with you, and you will know
you're very close to Me.*

*Filled with My Spirit, how you will
grow!*

You are My branches; I am the tree.

*If you are faithful, others will know
you are alive in Me.*

*Love one another - I have loved you,
and I have shown you how to be free;
serve one another, and when you do,
do it in love for Me.*

YouTube link for this hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3xwGEFXcNw&t=37s>

3. INPUT (*from Ecclesia series*)

With this vision of the Eucharist as our life and our identity in front of us, we need to consider the nature of the structure of the celebration of the

Eucharist, which requires our participation, so that the vision becomes reality in us.

3. INPUT (*from Ecclesia series*)

The Eucharist is made up of two equal tables – the table or liturgy of the Word and the table or liturgy of the Eucharist. It is the Word that becomes Eucharist and the Eucharist realizes in us the Word. This means that Word and Eucharist are absolutely interdependent and are in fact one reality. While we place the emphasis on the liturgy of the Eucharist (we are focused on the consecration and perhaps even more on communion), we need to appreciate the place of the Word in this single celebration of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Let us begin with the liturgy of the Word. This is a dialogue between God and us – a conversation of love between God and his people. This places the first challenge before us – do we really love God and want to have this conversation? God speaks and we respond using the very words that he has given us. The structure is Old Testament (God preparing the way for Jesus) and a responsorial Psalm. Then there is a reading from the New Testament Letters (the Church living Jesus) with an acclamation that responds and anticipates the Gospel. Finally, we receive the Gospel itself, which is Jesus speaking to us here and now. Our response to the Gospel is simple and direct – Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ by which we acknowledge that we know

that it is Jesus speaking to us.

A further challenge is here for us – the Word needs to be proclaimed with boldness and we need to listen with attention and a desire to receive the Word into our hearts and minds and a willingness to live this Word as his People. In addition to being involved in this dialogue, we need to see the connection between ourselves and the Word as a living reality for us – determining us and our lives so that the Word is both active and is lived in action. This is where the homily plays a crucial role, rooting the Word in our life reality as individuals and as a community.

This dialogue leads to further responses – our faith (I believe), our trust and confidence in God in the prayers of intercession that we entrust to him (Lord graciously hear us) and finally in the total giving of ourselves as sacrifice into the perfect sacrifice of Jesus – the Word becomes Eucharist – as we receive from the Table of the Word, so we commit ourselves to the Word and give ourselves into Eucharist at the table of the Eucharist which follows. In the liturgy of the Eucharist, Jesus in his sacrifice is made present (Word and Spirit) – this is my Body; this is my Blood and into this sacrifice we place ourselves. Again we are challenged in terms of our own sacrifices offered in Christ.

As the Father receives us in Christ, so he responds by giving us the reality of Communion in Christ. This empowers us to live out the Word that we have committed ourselves to live and for which we have given ourselves in sacrifice. Indeed the Word has become Eucharist and Eucharist, as sacrifice

and meal, has become the Word of life in our lives and our living.

May we meet the serious challenges of participation in the celebration of the Eucharist, that it may be for all of us our life and realize us as God's people in Jesus our Saviour – Eucharist the summit and source of our lives.

4. SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 24: 13-35

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came

back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see." And he said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them,

who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road,

and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Quote on which to reflect:

BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA (1910-1997)

"Your life must be woven around the Eucharist. Direct your eyes to Him, who is the Light; bring your hearts very close to His Divine Heart; ask Him for the

grace to know Him, for the charity to love Him, for the courage to serve Him. Seek him longingly."

5. REFLECTION

Individual Reflection on the following:

✦ What do I need to do to recognize that it is Jesus speaking to me when I hear the Word proclaimed at Mass?

✦ How do I make the dialogue between Jesus and me become a reality in my life?

6. GROUP SHARING AND DISCUSSION

7. ACTION FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

How do I make the dialogue between Jesus and me become a reality in my life?

Take the challenges presented in the homily at Mass this coming Sunday and

live them out each day for the next week.

8. CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: The Father has established in Christ the foundation of all our hope and the principle of our resurrection. Let us rejoice in Christ and cry out to him saying ...

All: King of glory hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord Jesus through your resurrection you entered the sanctuary of heaven to offer the blood of your own sacrifice, lead us with you into the glory of the Father...

All: King of glory hear our prayer.

Leader: Through your resurrection you confirmed the faith of your disciples and sent them out into the world, make our Archbishop, priests and deacons faithful preachers of the gospel...

All: King of glory hear our prayer.

Leader: You are the Word and the Life, may we come to everlasting Life as we participate in the Eucharist...

All: King of glory hear our prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven ...

Leader: (While making the sign of the cross)

May the Lord bless us, keep us from harm and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

We sing together: (an alternate piece of music can be used)

*Be still and know
that I am God (x3)*

*Thula wazi ndingu
Tixo (x3)*

*Wees stil en weet
ek is u God (x3)*

YouTube link for this hymn (English only):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyDr9-Mpc_s

SOCIAL TIME

SESSION 3

ONE BREAD... ONE BODY

1. WELCOME, MEET AND GREET

2. OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Let us pray together for our Parish community as we begin our time together today.

All: Gracious and loving God, we ask you to send your Holy Spirit upon our parish to fill us with love. Make us instruments of your love to everyone that we encounter at home, at work, in our neighbourhoods, and in our parish community. Work through us so that we can bring your truth to those who are searching for you. Help us to grow in

gratitude so that we can recognize and thank you for all the good things you have given us.

Instil in us a deep sense of generosity so that we are willing to share our gifts, our talents, our time, and our financial resources.

Deepen our desire to follow your will and to do all things for your honour and glory. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Saviour. Amen
Glory be to the Father...

We sing together: (an alternate piece of music can be used)

*In bread we bring you Lord, our
body's labour*

*In wine we offer you our spirit's grief
We do not ask you, Lord, who is my
neighbour?*

*But stand united now, one in belief
O we have gladly*

*heard your word, your holy word
And now in answer, Lord, our gifts
we bring*

*Our selfish hearts make true, our
failing faith renew*

*Our life belongs to you, our Lord and
King*

*The bread we offer you is blessed and
broken*

*And it becomes for us our spirit's food
Over the cup we bring, your word is
spoken*

*Make it your gift to us, your healing blood
Take all that daily toil, plant in our
heart's poor soil*

*Take all we start and spoil, each hopeful
dream*

*The chances we have missed, the graces
we resist*

Lord, in thy Eucharist, take and redeem

YouTube link for this hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTXPV0UFtTg>

3. INPUT (*from Ecclesia series*)

This Session will develop our understanding of the connection between the assembled community and the Eucharist and the implications for us. Community is essential to the Eucharist and Eucharist to the community, for it is in Eucharist that the unity of the community is increasingly realized.

Through Baptism, we are drawn into the communion of the Trinity and into relationship with one another as the community of the Church. Hence the issue of our communion, in and through the Trinity, is of tremendous importance. Although we often see ourselves as individuals flung together by the fact that we live in a given geographical area and so attend the same parish, the reality is vastly different. If we see ourselves as a random collection of individuals, then we can easily set ourselves apart from the community and not have any sense of our responsibility for one another. This is a denial of the reality of our Baptism and a failure for each of us realizing together the truth about Baptism.

We are a communion community, profoundly connected to one another in the unifying Trinity and we are responsible for one another coming to salvation in Jesus. We are first and foremost communion and only then individuals, bringing our uniqueness and giftedness to enrich the whole.

The Mass is the public worship of God,

which immediately makes it all about the community. The assembled community is the presence of Jesus, so that in him we are worshipping the Father. In Eucharist, we have the most perfect expression of our worship of God and at the same time we are made holy as community. Such growth in holiness is all about our becoming one, becoming communion at an ever deeper and fuller level.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist there is both sacrifice and communion, even if we sometimes place the emphasis on receiving communion. The latter depends on the reality of sacrifice – we place our sacrifices into the perfect sacrifice of Jesus made present and so offer ourselves and our lives in Jesus to the Father and in turn the Father returns what we offer as communion – the sacrifice in a meal and a meal in the sacrifice. Again our sacrifices are all that we strive to do that the Father gives us to and this is all about who we are in him and for each other. When we live this inner reality of the Eucharist, then receiving communion becomes all about our communion.

Again this challenges us to acknowledge, respect, value care for and reverence one another. It embraces prayer for and service of one another as expressing our identity as communion community, bound in the love that we have for one another. In practical terms this is our being compassionate, kind, considerate, caring, forgiving, understanding towards others in even the simplest and most ordinary of activities, which in themselves seem of little consequence,

but which become radiant with His love. and may we come to see the Eucharist, not as a chore or obligation, but rather as the fullest expression of who we are and hope to become.

May the Spirit draw us to recognize and love one another within our communion

4. SCRIPTURE READING

JOHN 6:53 -58

So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and

my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever."

Quote on which to reflect:

YOUCAT 211

We are not Church because we get along well, or because we happen to end up in the same parish community, but rather because in the Eucharist we receive the

Body of Christ and are increasingly being transformed into the body of Christ

5. REFLECTION

Individual Reflection on the following:

✦ In what ways do I express my communion with the Parish Community?

✦ How do we experience unity in our Parish?

6. GROUP SHARING AND DISCUSSION

7. ACTION FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

Ways in which to live out our response to the sharing, e.g.

✦ Don't rush off after Mass this Sunday. Stay and chat to someone you do not know.

✦ Participate in a parish activity or liturgy outside of the weekend Mass.

✦ Prepare for the Easter Triduum by praying the Stations of the Cross.

8. CLOSING PRAYER

All: God of all creation, we thank you and praise you for all the blessings we have received, especially the gift of your unconditional love, your Son, Jesus Christ. Encircle our families and this community of[Parish name] with the power of your Holy Spirit. Strengthen us in the ways of faith, hope, love, mercy, peace and compassion. Make us aware of our responsibility to care for your creation, to reach out to our brothers and sisters

who are poor and in need, and to act with justice and love for one another in our daily lives.

To the sick, grant health, to the troubled, bring serenity, and to those in sorrow, joy. Mary, Assumed into heaven...pray for us. St. [Parish Patron Saint]...pray for us.

Leader: (While making the sign of the cross)

May the Lord bless us, keep us from harm and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

We sing together: (an alternate piece of music can be used)

*Bind us together, Lord, bind us together
With cords that cannot be broken
Bind us together, Lord, bind us together
Bind us together in Love*

*There is only one God,
There is only one King
There is only one Body,
That is why we sing.*

*Fit for the glory of God,
Purchased by His precious Blood
Born with the right to be free
Jesus the victory has won.*

*We are the family of God
We are the promise divine
We are God's chosen desire
We are the glorious new wine.*

YouTube link for this hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljXaoPAVJhs>

SOCIAL TIME

SESSION 4

OUR HOPE... OUR JOY

1. WELCOME, MEET AND GREET

2. OPENING PRAYER

Leader: Be still and know the presence of the Lord here in this place, here in the hearts of each one of us. (Pause for silent prayer)

All: Lord Jesus, hear our prayer for the spiritual renewal of bishops, priests, deacons, brothers, sisters, lay ministers and seminarians, especially those of our arch diocese. We praise you for giving their ministry to the Church. Renew them with the gifts of Your Spirit today. You once opened the Holy Scriptures to Your disciples when You walked on this earth. Now renew Your ordained and chosen ones with the truth and power of

Your Word.

In Eucharist you gave Your disciples renewed life and hope. Nourish Your consecrated ones with Your Own Body and Blood. Help them to imitate in their lives the death and resurrection they celebrate around Your altar.

Give them enthusiasm for the Gospel, zeal for the salvation of all people, courage in leadership and humility in service.

Give them Your love for one another and for all their brothers and sisters in You.

For You love them, Lord Jesus and we love and pray for them in Your Holy Name. Amen.

Glory be to the Father...

We sing together: (an alternate piece of music can be used)

*Be still for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One is here*

*Come bow before Him now, with
reverence and fear*

*In Him no sin is found, we stand on
holy ground*

*Be still for the presence of the Lord, the
Holy One is here*

*Be still for the glory of the Lord is
shining all around*

*He burns with holy fire, with
splendour He is crowned*

*How awesome is the sight our radiant
King of light*

*Be still for the glory of the Lord is
shining all around*

*Be still for the power of the Lord is
moving in this place*

*He comes to cleanse and heal, to
minister His grace*

*No work too hard for Him in faith
receive from Him*

*Be still for the power of the Lord is
moving in this place*

YouTube link for this hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZ5NYG2kP8k>

3. INPUT (*from Ecclesia series*)

As we come to the last Session of these prayer services, we need to bring together all that we have gained so far - The Eucharist is our life and expresses our identity. The celebration draws us into the Word and through Word into Eucharist. We encounter Christ fully present to us and in Him become a communion community, doing what we do in Eucharist to realize the salvation of the world, all things reconciled and restored in Jesus. And now it is for us to realize that this is both our true hope and joy.

The highpoint of the Church's Liturgical Year is the celebration of the Easter Triduum or the Great Three Days - Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. This is one liturgy in three stages, entering into the very moments of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection, which is the core of our faith. The culmination of these three days is the Easter Vigil, during which we renew the promises of our Baptism and initiate new members into the Church.

Every Sunday is then a little Easter, celebrating the Day of the Lord's resurrection. As the believing community of the Church, we gather to celebrate Sunday as an ongoing realization of our Christian initiation and this is done through the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is, therefore, both the celebration of the suffering, death and resurrection of

Jesus and the means by which we grow into our initiation, our salvation. In her wisdom, the Church places on all Catholics the obligation to celebrate Eucharist on Sundays.

Clearly the celebration of the Eucharist needs to be more than just the fulfilling of an obligation since Eucharist demands our participation both in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Such participation needs to engage the whole person and the community of all who are assembled into Jesus. When we experience such active and full participation, we are drawn into the very life of the risen Jesus. This means that the Sunday Eucharist is also about celebrating our growing into our resurrection in Jesus or our salvation. This is an internal reality – becoming holy and growing into communion - and is there as his promises being fulfilled in us.

Therefore, this is both our hope and our joy. Not only do we hope for salvation, but when we celebrate Eucharist fully, our hope is being fulfilled. This means that hope becomes a dominant reality in our lives when we grow into Jesus, deepen our communion and know that salvation is being offered through us for all peoples. Eucharist is, therefore, our hope expressed and realized.

In turn this is the cause of a deep joy - not something superficial (seeing the Eucharist as a fun event or as a form of entertainment) - but rather a joy that radiates in us because of all that happens within us through the Eucharist. No matter how imperfect we might be, we know this joy in knowing that we are growing into the very life of Jesus. This is a joy that cannot be overcome by the tensions, sufferings or challenges of our lives – it is the joy that comes from Jesus who has already overcome all of this in us.

May we come to see the Eucharist as central to our lives and living - our hope and joy – and may we embrace the celebration of the Eucharist as the most important thing that we do in our lives. In turn, may this sense of the Eucharist mean that we give ourselves more generously and significantly to the celebration of the Eucharist and to living for others all that Eucharist is for us and does in us.

4. SCRIPTURE READING

JOHN 6: 44-51

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I

say to you, he who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Quote on which to reflect:

CCC 2657

The Holy Spirit, who instructs us to celebrate the liturgy in expectation of Christ's return, teaches us to pray in hope. Conversely, the prayer of the Church and personal prayer nourish hope in us. The psalms especially, with their concrete and varied language,

teach us to fix our hope in God: "I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry." As St. Paul prayed: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

5. REFLECTION

Individual Reflection on the following:

- ✦ What gives me the Hope and Joy that comes from my celebration of the Eucharist?
- ✦ What has changed in my life and in my celebration of the Eucharist as a result of this prayer series?
- ✦ Is every Sunday another Easter in my life?

6. GROUP SHARING AND DISCUSSION

7. ACTION FOR THE WEEK AHEAD

Ways in which to live out our response to the sharing, e.g.

Make the Easter Triduum extra special for you and your loved ones by attending all the services during that time.

8. CLOSING PRAYER

All: O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all

nations and races may serve you in harmony at the Eucharistic table; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: send your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father. *Amen.*

Our Father who art in heaven ...

Leader: (While making the sign of the cross)

May the Lord bless us, keep us from harm and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

We sing together: (an alternate piece of music can be used)

*O Sacrament most holy, O sacrament divine,
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine. (Repeat in Afrikaans
and isiXhosa)*

*O sakrament mees heilig, O sakrament van voorsiening
Alle prys en alle dankseging behoort elke oomblik aan U*

*Owu! Isakramente engcwele, Owu! Isakramente yaphezulu,
Zonke izibongo nemiblelo, ngawo Onke amexesha zezakho.*

YouTube link for this hymn (English only):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbNENIa8Gew>

SOCIAL TIME

NOTES
